

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 30, 2005

The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde  
Chairman  
Committee on International Relations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2170 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2120 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Hoekstra  
Chairman  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H405 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairmen:

We are writing to request that your Committees hold hearings to investigate reports of a pre-war deal between the United Kingdom and the United States and evidence that pre-war intelligence was intentionally manipulated. One-hundred twenty-eight Members of Congress, along with some 560,000 citizens have sent letters to the President requesting information about these issues. These letters have gone unanswered. Given the importance of these matters, we believe it is incumbent upon Congress to investigate.

On May 1, 2005, the Sunday London Times published a leaked document with the minutes of a secret meeting from highly placed sources inside the British Government. Among other things, the document, which has become known as the "Downing Street Minutes," indicated: (1) Prime Minister Tony Blair chaired a July 2002 meeting, at which he discussed military options, having already committed himself to supporting President Bush's plans for invading Iraq; (2) British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw acknowledged that the case for war was "thin" as "Saddam was not threatening his neighbours and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran"; (3) A separate secret briefing for the meeting said that Britain and America had to "create" conditions to justify a war; and (4) A British official reported on his recent talks in Washington that "there was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."<sup>1</sup>

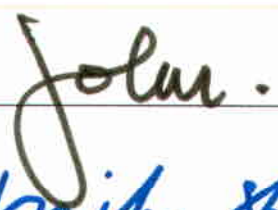



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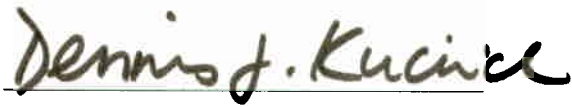

<sup>1</sup>See Attached Document, "Secret and strictly personal – UK eyes only," July 23, 2002.

In addition, since the May 1 story in the Sunday London Times, seven additional classified documents have been leaked to the press.<sup>2</sup> Collectively, the documents present serious questions as to whether intelligence was manipulated and whether officials in both the U.S. and Britain misled the public as to whether military action in Iraq was really the last resort as both nations purported to be the case. These questions take on even greater significance when examining a chart posted on The Raw Story website that depicts a spike in allied bombings of Iraq, which occurred before Congress formally authorized military action. This increase in activity is consistent with United States Lieutenant-General Michael Moseley's admission this week that allied aircraft flew 21,736 sorties over Iraq, dropping more than 600 bombs on 391 "carefully selected targets" prior to October 16, 2002.<sup>3</sup> These raids - reportedly done to "la[y] the foundation" for future military action - may have gone beyond the scope of maintaining security in Iraq's no-fly zones and, consequently, may have been illegal.

Although there were informal hearings on these issues held on June 16, 2005, we believe it is imperative that your Committees convene formal hearings and investigations regarding the charges laid out in the Downing Street Minutes. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

cc: The Honorable Dennis J. Hastert, Speaker  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader  
The Honorable Ike Skelton, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services  
The Honorable Tom Lantos, Ranking Member, Committee on International Relations  
The Honorable Jane Harman, Ranking Member, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

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<sup>2</sup>See Michael Smith, "Cabinet Office Paper: Conditions for Military Action," Sunday London Times, June 12, 2005; Michael Smith, "British Bombing Raids were Illegal, says Foreign Office," Sunday London Times, June 19, 2005.

<sup>3</sup>See Michael Smith, "General Admits to Secret Air War," Sunday London Times, June 26, 2005.

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Sam J. Noon

Wm. Lacy Clay

Murray Kaptur

Fred. Strickland

Tom Uchill

Raul M. Grijalva

Donald McDermott

Louise M. Slaughter

Darlene Hooley

Jana Dellette

Bob Latta

Mark W. Waters

Carolyn B. Maloney

Brian Bair

Barney Frank

John F. Tierney

Chris Van Hollen

Grace J. Nagarkar

Tom Allen

Emel Ch

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Robert Wexler

Mayor L. Chu

Barbara Lee

Zoe Lofgren

John Lewis

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Jim Langerwin

Cora L. Lee

Julia Carson

Sam Tan

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Jason A. Davis

Jim Oberstar

Lauren Bonn

Robert Pitts

U.S. Sen.

Tim Ryan

Wanda H. Hinchey

Gregory L. Meeks



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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Kennedy", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in blue ink, clearly legible as "Patrick J. Kennedy", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, clearly legible as "Melvin R. Watt", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in blue ink, clearly legible as "Hilda L. Salis", written over a horizontal line.

# *The Secret Downing Street Memo*

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SECRET AND STRICTLY PERSONAL - UK EYES ONLY

DAVID MANNING

From: Matthew Rycroft

Date: 23 July 2002

S 195 /02

cc: Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Attorney-General, Sir Richard Wilson, John Scarlett, Francis Richards, CDS, C, Jonathan Powell, Sally Morgan, Alastair Campbell

IRAQ: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING, 23 JULY

Copy addressees and you met the Prime Minister on 23 July to discuss Iraq.

This record is extremely sensitive. No further copies should be made. It should be shown only to those with a genuine need to know its contents.

John Scarlett summarised the intelligence and latest JIC assessment. Saddam's regime was tough and based on extreme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action. Saddam was worried and expected an attack, probably by air and land, but he was not convinced that it would be immediate or overwhelming. His regime expected their neighbours to line up with the US. Saddam knew that regular army morale was poor. Real support for Saddam among the public was probably narrowly based.

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.

CDS said that military planners would brief CENTCOM on 1-2 August, Rumsfeld on 3 August and Bush on 4 August.

The two broad US options were:

- (a) Generated Start. A slow build-up of 250,000 US troops, a short (72 hour) air campaign, then a move up to Baghdad from the south. Lead time of 90 days (30 days preparation plus 60 days deployment to Kuwait).
- (b) Running Start. Use forces already in theatre (3 x 6,000), continuous air campaign, initiated by an Iraqi casus belli. Total lead time of 60 days with the air campaign beginning even earlier. A hazardous option.

The US saw the UK (and Kuwait) as essential, with basing in Diego Garcia and Cyprus critical for either option. Turkey and other Gulf states were also important, but less vital. The three main options for UK involvement were:

- (i) Basing in Diego Garcia and Cyprus, plus three SF squadrons.
- (ii) As above, with maritime and air assets in addition.

(iii) As above, plus a land contribution of up to 40,000, perhaps with a discrete role in Northern Iraq entering from Turkey, tying down two Iraqi divisions.

The Defence Secretary said that the US had already begun “spikes of activity” to put pressure on the regime. No decisions had been taken, but he thought the most likely timing in US minds for military action to begin was January, with the timeline beginning 30 days before the US Congressional elections.

The Foreign Secretary said he would discuss this with Colin Powell this week. It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran. We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in the UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force.

The Attorney-General said that the desire for regime change was not a legal base for military action. There were three possible legal bases: self-defence, humanitarian intervention, or UNSC authorisation. The first and second could not be the base in this case. Relying on UNSCR 1205 of three years ago would be difficult. The situation might of course change.

The Prime Minister said that it would make a big difference politically and legally if Saddam refused to allow in the UN inspectors. Regime change and WMD were linked in the sense that it was the regime that was producing the WMD. There were different strategies for dealing with Libya and Iran. If the political context were right, people would support regime change. The two key issues were whether the military plan worked and whether we had the political strategy to give the military plan the space to work.

On the first, CDS said that we did not know yet if the US battleplan was workable. The military were continuing to ask lots of questions.

For instance, what were the consequences, if Saddam used WMD on day one, or if Baghdad did not collapse and urban warfighting began? You said that Saddam could also use his WMD on Kuwait. Or on Israel, added the Defence Secretary.

The Foreign Secretary thought the US would not go ahead with a military plan unless convinced that it was a winning strategy. On this, US and UK interests converged. But on the political strategy, there could be US/UK differences. Despite US resistance, we should explore discreetly the ultimatum. Saddam would continue to play hard-ball with the UN.

John Scarlett assessed that Saddam would allow the inspectors back in only when he thought the threat of military action was real.

The Defence Secretary said that if the Prime Minister wanted UK military involvement, he would need to decide this early. He cautioned that many in the US did not think it worth going down the ultimatum route. It would be important for the Prime Minister to set out the political context to Bush.

Conclusions:

(a) We should work on the assumption that the UK would take part in any military action. But we needed a fuller picture of US planning before we could take any firm decisions. CDS should tell the US military that we were considering a range of options.

(b) The Prime Minister would revert on the question of whether funds could be spent in preparation for this operation.

(c) CDS would send the Prime Minister full details of the proposed military campaign and possible UK contributions by the end of the week.

(d) The Foreign Secretary would send the Prime Minister the background on the UN inspectors, and discreetly work up the ultimatum to Saddam.

He would also send the Prime Minister advice on the positions of countries in the region especially Turkey, and of the key EU member states.

(e) John Scarlett would send the Prime Minister a full intelligence update.

(f) We must not ignore the legal issues: the Attorney-General would consider legal advice with FCO/MOD legal advisers.

(I have written separately to commission this follow-up work.)

MATTHEW RYCROFT

(Rycroft was a Downing Street foreign policy aide)